

*Alternatives Considered in Detail*  
*Description of Alternatives; Alternative B*

One ORV Designation Implementation Plan

- Detailing how the ORV designations for the planning area would be implemented including public awareness, signing, and enforcement.

Two ACEC Management Plans

- One for each ACEC.

Three Recreation Activity Management Plans (RAMPs)

- One for each special recreation management area (SRMA)

Four Habitat Management Plans (HMPs)

- One would be a revision of the Isolated Tracts HMP.
- The others would be prepared for pronghorn winter range, pronghorn summer range, and sage grouse winter habitat.

Four Cultural Resource Management Plans

- One each for Devil's Corral, Cedar Fields, Wilson Butte Cave, and the Oregon Trail.

One Cave Management Plan

- For the L12 areas (Areas of Geologic Interest)

Nine AMPs, CRMPs, or other appropriate plans

- one for each of the nine allotments specified in Appendix D

One Limited Fire Suppression Plan

The fire management plan will include guidelines to

- limit surface disturbance in WSAs recommended suitable, Cedar Fields SRMA, the Oregon Trail, and Areas of Geologic Interest.
- protect vegetation valuable to wildlife on Isolated Tracts, Pronghorn Winter Range HMP area, and brush protection areas.
- protect the naturalness and scenic quality of Vineyard Creek ACEC and Box Canyon/Blueheart Springs ACEC.

Some of the activity plans listed above may be consolidated into a single plan where two or more activities have activity plan needs in the same general area.

**Alternative C**

Goals. This is the proposed Monument RMP. A variety of resource uses would be allowed. Production and use of commodity resources and commercial use authorization would occur, while protecting fragile resources and wildlife

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habitat, preserving natural systems and cultural values, and allowing for non-consumptive resource uses. A balanced approach to multiple use would be pursued. Resource use levels would be within the range set by Alternatives B and D.

Multiple Use and Transfer Areas in Alternative C. Map 4 shows the multiple use and transfer areas for Alternative C.

M1-Moderate Use. 826,577 acres. No special limitations or restrictions on the type or intensity of resource use would be applied in this area. Valid uses would be allowed subject to environmental review and stipulations or special conditions to protect resources. This area would be open to ORV use.

L1-WSA Recommended Suitable. 87,902 acres. These areas would be recommended suitable for designation by Congress as a part of the Wilderness Preservation System. This includes the Raven's Eye and Sand Butte WSAs.

These areas would be recommended suitable in Alternative C because they are considered to have high quality wilderness characteristics. Moderate conflicts with other resource uses may be present; other resource uses may be somewhat constrained by designation of these two WSAs. Emphasis was placed on high quality wilderness character.

If designated wilderness by Congress, the areas would be closed to ORV use. New mining claims would be prohibited. Mineral leasing would not be prohibited by wilderness designation, but wilderness character would be considered in making mineral leasing decisions. Land uses would be restricted to those compatible with BLM's Wilderness Management Policy. Utility developments would be effectively prohibited. A wilderness management plan would be prepared for each WSA designated. The wilderness management plans would include fire suppression guidelines designed to protect or enhance wilderness character.

If not designated wilderness by Congress, the areas would generally be managed as M1 areas as described above. The exception is 3,258 acres of areas of geologic interest within the Raven's Eye and Sand Butte WSAs which would be managed as L12 areas as described below. *Sand Butte (the volcanic cone, not the entire WSA) would be closed to ORV use to protect its naturalness (approximately 220 acres).* No other special designations or developments would be proposed. The other restrictions on ORVs, minerals, land uses, and fire described above would not apply.

L3-Sand Butte ORV Closure. 1,751 acres. This area would be closed to ORV use. Otherwise, management would be the same as described for M1 areas. The ORV closure would make a more easily managed, more definite boundary along a road for exclusion of ORVs from the Sand Butte WSA. Without the L3 area, the

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WSA boundary would be difficult to recognize and manage as the ORV closure boundary for the Sand Butte WSA, as it doesn't follow a road or easily recognizable feature. If the Sand Butte WSA is not designated wilderness by Congress, this area would no longer be closed to ORV use.

L4-ACEC-Substation Tract Relict Vegetation Area. 440 acres. This area would be designated an ACEC to focus management attention on special values. The area contains a natural vegetation community representative of a range site that occurred commonly in the planning area prior to human caused disturbances. It is the only known remaining relict of this condition and size in the Shoshone District, and is therefore highly valuable for research and reference. Carey Act applications have been filed on all 440 acres.

Management to protect the relict vegetation community would entail retention in Federal ownership and aggressive fire control efforts. Other opportunities to reduce the risk of loss to fire would be pursued, including cooperative agreements with adjacent landowners. ORV use would be limited to designated roads and trails to protect the vegetation while allowing movement of local farm traffic. No surface occupancy associated with mineral lease development would be allowed. *Livestock grazing would be prohibited to protect the vegetation.*

*An activity plan would be prepared to guide management and protection of the relict vegetation community, especially protection from fire.*

*The area would be given priority for fire suppression in the fire management plan and would be under full fire suppression.*

L6-ACEC-Vineyard Creek Natural Area. 105 acres. This area would be designated an ACEC to focus management attention on special values.

Vineyard Creek is the only known spawning habitat for a unique cutthroat/ rainbow hybrid trout. The habitat is threatened by sedimentation from irrigation return flow from private land. Management to protect this habitat would entail coordinating with private landowners to reduce or eliminate sedimentation caused by the irrigation return flow entering Vineyard Creek. The objective would be to lower the sediment load of the return flow below 100 ppm or to stop the return flow from entering the stream.

Vineyard Creek contains habitat that may be suitable for the Bliss Rapids snail, a candidate endangered species. The habitat in Vineyard Creek is similar to that of Box Canyon which supports a population of the snail. Future resource uses and proposals would be closely examined to ensure that snail habitat would not be adversely affected or that adverse effects could be mitigated.

This area lies within the proposed Dry Cataracts National Natural Landmark. Geologic formations associated with the Bonneville Flood, including alluvial gravel deposits, would be protected from human disturbances that would degrade their naturalness. Mineral material sales and free use would be prohibited.

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The Vineyard Creek area is a very scenic and unique area. Future resource uses and proposals would be closely examined to prevent degradation of scenic quality and naturalness. No surface occupancy associated with mineral lease development would be allowed.

*An activity plan would be prepared to guide management of the unique resources of the area. This plan would specify measures to reduce sedimentation of Vineyard Creek.*

The area would be closed to ORV use to protect scenic quality and promote visitor safety. The area is near an area heavily used by ORVs.

The area would be given priority for fire suppression in the fire management plan and would be under full fire suppression.

L7-ACEC-Box Canyon/Blueheart Springs Sensitive Area. 128 acres. This area would be designated an ACEC to focus management attention on special values as described for L7 in Alternative B. The area would be open to ORV use. No surface occupancy associated with mineral lease development would be allowed.

*An activity plan would be prepared to guide management of the unique resources of the area. This plan would include provisions to protect habitat for the Shoshone sculpin and the Bliss Rapids snail.*

L8-Little Wood River SRMA. 2,787 acres. The riparian habitat and fishery of this area would be maintained or improved to support quality sport fishing opportunities as described for L8 in Alternative B.

A recreation activity management plan would be prepared for the area. The area would be open to ORV use.

L9-Snake River Rim SRMA. 5,102 acres. This area would be managed to provide for a wide variety of recreation activities including rifle shooting, archery, motorcycle riding/racing, picnicking, sightseeing, and float-boating, while resolving conflicts among various uses and protecting cultural resources and fragile soils. The demand for these activities is expected to increase as is the potential for user conflicts.

Sub-area L9a, 345 acres in Devil's Corral, would be closed to ORV use to protect cultural resources and soils. The remaining 4,757 acres would be open to ORV use.

Sub-areas L9a and L9d, totalling 1,159 acres, lie within the proposed Dry Cataracts National Natural Landmark. Geologic formations associated with the Bonneville Flood, including alluvial gravel deposits, would be protected from human disturbances that would degrade their naturalness. Mineral material sales or free use would be prohibited.

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Sub-area L9e, 374 acres, would be managed for protection, maintenance, and enhancement of wildlife habitat. These tracts are included in the existing Isolated Tracts HMP and would be covered by the revised HMP prepared for L11 areas in Alternative C.

Livestock grazing would not be restricted by recreation oriented management in L9.

The existing Snake River Rim Recreation Area Management Plan would be revised to reflect changes from existing ORV designations, acreage within the Snake River Rim SRMA, transfer area designations, float-boating management, protection of geologic formations associated with the Bonneville Flood in sub-areas L9a and L9d, and wildlife management on sub-area L9e.

A cultural resource management plan would be prepared for Devil's Corral (L9a). This plan would specify the degree of protection and the interpretive measures appropriate for the area. Fire suppression guidelines to limit surface disturbance would be developed and incorporated into the fire management plan.

L10-Cedar Fields SRMA. 2,240 acres. This area would be managed to provide a variety of recreation activities including ORV use, sport fishing, and river floating; to maintain or enhance wildlife habitat; and to protect scenic quality, fragile soils, and cultural resources.

ORV use would be limited in the area, but restrictions would be applied only where significant damage to high quality and highly visible scenic areas, fragile soils, significant wildlife values, and significant cultural resources is occurring. ORV use in sub-area L10a (395 acres) would be limited to designated trails *consistent with Bureau of Reclamation limitations on adjacent lands*. Livestock grazing and minerals activities would not be restricted by recreation oriented management in the area.

A recreation activity management plan and a cultural resources management plan specifying the degree of protection and interpretive measures appropriate for the area would be prepared. These plans would include fire suppression guidelines designed to protect fragile soils and cultural resources by limiting surface disturbance.

L11-Isolated Tracts. 10,551 acres. These tracts would be managed for protection, maintenance, and enhancement of wildlife habitat, primarily for upland game birds. In Alternative C, these are existing Isolated Tracts of high or medium value as identified on Map 8 and potential Isolated Tracts of high value. An exception to this rule is that tracts involved in the Bureau of Reclamation Transfer Area (T4) were placed into the T4 category even though they otherwise would have been managed as L11 areas. This is because the Bureau of Reclamation would be involved in a program for these T4 areas that would provide wildlife habitat for upland game birds that would be equivalent to or better than the habitat BLM could provide on L11 areas. This involves 902 acres of potential and existing Isolated Tracts.

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The existing Isolated Tracts HMP would be revised to reflect changes in the number of tracts. Sub-area L9e, described earlier for Alternative C, would be covered by the revised HMP. The modified HMP would include fire suppression guidelines for protection of wildlife habitat on Isolated Tracts.

These areas would remain open to ORV use. Future ORV restrictions could occur on a case-by-case basis if necessary to protect wildlife or wildlife habitat.

Livestock would be excluded from 821 acres of Isolated Tracts by fencing.

The areas would be given priority for fire suppression in the fire management plan and would be under full fire suppression.

L12-Areas of Geologic Interest. 6,996 acres. These areas would be managed to preserve fragile geologic formations associated with caves as discussed for Alternative B. The areas would remain open to ORV use.

No surface occupancy associated with mineral lease development would be allowed within 250 feet of fragile geologic formations or caves.

A cave management plan would be prepared for these areas. This would include fire suppression guidelines to limit surface disturbance near the geologic formations.

T1-Transfer. 20,538 acres. These areas would be available for transfer from Federal ownership. Transfer could be by sale, exchange, agricultural entry or other means determined appropriate as *discussed on pages 3-15, 3-16 and E-1 to E-3*. Detailed examination would be conducted for these tracts prior to the final decision about transfer or type of transfer. Examinations would consider threatened and endangered species, cultural resources, and other resource values. *Agricultural entry applications and other transfer proposals for these areas would be considered in the order received.*

As consistent with the resource management guidelines and general provisions for multiple use and transfer areas discussed earlier in this chapter, lands were included in T1 for Alternative C in the following situations.

1. Parcels of relatively low multiple use value that are
  - outside of grazing allotments
  - small grazing allotments or portions of allotments that would be difficult to manage for livestock, uneconomical to fence, with little or no potential for intensive grazing management or combination with adjacent allotments. These are generally odd-shaped, narrow "fingers" of public land.
  - isolated parcels.

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2. Agricultural trespasses where a definite physical barrier to further agricultural encroachment exists. This could be a natural barrier such as lava outcrops or a river, or a man-made barrier such as a road or canal. The trespass would be settled prior to transfer.
3. Occupancy trespasses where resource values are low, and disposal of the tract would solve the trespass problem. The trespass would be settled prior to transfer. Only the portion of a parcel necessary to resolve the trespass would be transferred.

Parcels meeting the above criteria were excluded from T1 in the following situations.

1. Parcels essential to ensure public access to BLM-administered public lands.
2. Existing Isolated Tracts covered by the Isolated Tracts HMP of high or medium value and potential Isolated Tracts of high value as identified on Map 8.
3. Parcels important to the movement of livestock.

T2-Transfer-Agricultural Entry. 29,873 acres. These areas would be available for transfer from Federal ownership under the agricultural land laws or for local and State government needs or exchange. Other types of transfers may occur only if agricultural entry transfers leave parcels in Federal ownership that are difficult to manage because of odd configuration, access problems, or lack of adequate facilities (fences, cattleguards, water, etc.). These resulting difficult-to-manage tracts could be transferred from Federal ownership by sale, exchange, or other means as determined appropriate as discussed under T1. *T2 areas found to be unsuitable for transfer under agricultural land laws and not falling into the T1 category as described in the preceding sentence would remain in public ownership and be managed as described for M1 areas.*

Up to 25 percent of the T2 areas could be retained in public ownership and managed as L11 areas under the Isolated Tracts HMP. Criteria to be used in selecting these areas are contained in Appendix C. The areas would be selected on a case-by-case basis as T2 lands are considered for transfer.

Studies to determine suitability under the agricultural land laws include economic feasibility, physical suitability for agriculture, water availability, threatened and endangered species clearance, and cultural resources clearance.

In some cases, small parcels adjacent to agricultural applications were included in T2 if transfer of the application would make the small adjacent parcel difficult to manage as described above.

As consistent with the resource management guidelines and general provisions for multiple use and transfer areas discussed earlier in this chapter, lands were included in T2 for Alternative C in the following situations.

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1. An agricultural application for the tract has been filed.
2. The tract does not meet the requirements for inclusion in another transfer category such as T1, T3, or T4.
3. Soils on the tract are marginal or suitable for agriculture as defined in Chapter 3 and shown on Map 12.

Parcels meeting the above criteria were excluded from T2 in the following situations.

1. Parcels within grazing allotments with significant existing developments and having soils marginal for agriculture with a high erosion potential as shown on Map 14.
2. Existing Isolated Tracts, covered by the Isolated Tracts HMP, of high or medium value as identified on Map 8 and *potential high value Isolated Tracts*.
3. Parcels essential to ensure public access to BLM-administered public lands.
4. Parcels important to the movement of livestock.

T3-Jerome County Canyon Rim Transfer. 258 acres. This area would be available for transfer from Federal ownership as described for T1, but only if zoning regulations were changed to allow commercial or residential development.

Parcels were included in T3 for the same reasons as discussed for T1.

T4-Bureau of Reclamation Transfer. 3,751 acres. These lands would be withdrawn for the Minidoka *North Side Pumping Division Extension* Project and developed for irrigated farmland by the Bureau of Reclamation. Developed lands would be transferred from Federal ownership by the Bureau of Reclamation. Approximately *half of the area* would be retained by the Bureau of Reclamation for wildlife and recreation management. *Existing agricultural entry applications would be processed prior to withdrawal.*

These are lands that are compatible with this project.

Other Resource Uses in Alternative C.

Fire Management. Portions of the planning area, totaling 181,086 acres, would be under full fire suppression in Alternative C. Vineyard Creek ACEC (L6) and Box Canyon ACEC (L7) would be under full suppression to protect the



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naturalness and scenic quality of the areas. The Substation Tract ACEC would be under full suppression to protect natural vegetation communities. The Isolated Tracts (L11) and Pronghorn Winter Range HMP area (discussed below under Wildlife Habitat) would be under full suppression to protect the vegetation, primarily brush, important to wildlife habitat management objectives. The areas discussed above would also be given priority for fire suppression in the fire management plan.

The remainder of the planning area would be covered by a limited suppression plan. The purpose of this plan would be to more efficiently use fire suppression funds. However, since the planning area is subject to large fires, limited suppression would only take place when the burning index is below 22. This would typically require full suppression during July and August. Large, repeated fires cannot be tolerated from the wildlife habitat and soil erosion standpoint.

The General Fire Suppression Guidelines in Appendix B under "Standard Operating Procedures" would apply to most of the planning area. Exceptions to these would occur in portions of the planning area totalling at least 278,336 acres. <sup>1/</sup> Surface disturbing equipment would be more likely to be used in Isolated Tracts (L11), Pronghorn Winter Range HMP areas (see Map 15), and brush protection areas to protect the vegetation, primarily brush, important to wildlife habitat management objectives. Surface disturbing equipment would also be more likely to be used in the Substation Tract ACEC to protect natural vegetation communities. On the other hand, use of surface disturbing equipment would be very limited in WSAs recommended suitable (L1) to protect wilderness character, in Cedar Fields SRMA (L10) to protect fragile soils and cultural resources, in the Oregon Trail area and Devil's Corral (L9a) to protect cultural resources, and in the Areas of Geologic Interest (L12) to protect fragile geologic formations. Guidelines for fire suppression in the above areas would be included in the fire management plan.

Prescribed fire could be used as a tool for accomplishing the 19,000 acres of brush control proposed under Livestock Forage. The guidelines for Prescribed Fire in Appendix D under "Range Improvements" would apply. The use of prescribed fire in areas other than those proposed for brush control would be allowed only if found to be environmentally acceptable through consideration of environmental effects in the NEPA process. Such use could include projects such as noxious weed abatement or habitat management not foreseen at this time.

Prescribed fire would not be used in Substation Tract ACEC (L4), Vineyard Creek ACEC (L6), or Box Canyon/Blueheart Springs ACEC (L7).

In Alternative C, 100 miles of roads would be maintained annually to improve access for fire suppression forces and provide secure fuel breaks that could be used for firelines. This would cost approximately \$10,000 annually. The roads to be maintained are presently very rough and/or infrequently used. Vegetation growing in the roadways limits their usefulness as fire lines. The

<sup>1/</sup> The acreage involved in the brush protection areas and the Oregon Trail area is unknown at this time and would be determined in detailed examinations.